

Zen Bandits

# Zen Bandits

A Collection Of Poems

By Doug Tanoury



FUNKY DOG PUBLISHING



Zen Bandits

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DETROIT, MICHIGAN USA



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# Zen Bandits

## Zen Bandits

The peaceful moment stolen along  
With silence and solitude and stillness  
And I am left with the persistent gnaw of want

It is desire that lurks beyond every curve  
And glisten and gleams and shimmers  
In soft pale flesh and topaz blue irises

The fleeting nuance of a look that lingers  
A gaze and gesture and glance  
Draw me from remote paths

And I contemplate now  
The touch and warmth and wet  
That intrudes in each meditation

Disturbs calm contemplation  
The scent and smell and fragrance  
That is incense in the temple

I feel the moistness of fingers and palms  
Covering forehead and brow and eyes  
Separating me from enlightenment

## Zen Bandits

### My Ethereal Love

My Love is incorporeal and virtual  
Like a vapor  
Without substance and form  
And I often think  
That this is what the dead must feel  
For each other and how spirits  
Must love when touch has passed away  
Into the distance of dark impossibility  
And all sensuous trace is wrapped  
In cold repose

I love you purely like a ghost  
With mind and heart but mostly words  
Not formed in throat or shaped on tongue  
And launched from lips  
Nor propelled on the warmth  
Of my every breath  
But silent they come to you  
Like a midnight apparition  
That hangs before your eyes  
Untouchable and ethereal

From the underworld  
My words reach you now  
Where these lines appear  
Inchoate on the page  
And my voice that moves invisibly  
From this nether realm  
Is the sound of wind in the leaves  
And is the ice-cold moonlight  
Of a summer night

## Zen Bandits

hell

there is no doubt that when i'm dead  
i'll pay for things i did and said  
i'm also sure that as i'm judged  
i'll answer for the things i fudged  
and when they send me off to hell  
it'll be to chat lobby 7 on AOL.

## Zen Bandits

### Her Story

And she remains  
The story never written  
That moves me  
Ever so slowly and  
Wondrously soft

Through these lines  
From the beginning  
Shadowed and obscured  
To the ending washed  
In ambient light

It is a slow journey  
To greatness  
A quiet and solitary walk  
Where only the footsteps  
Of spirit are heard

And I say that my life  
Is her story every day  
A page turned  
Every word breathed  
Her legacy

For the ending  
Is brightly lit like an afternoon  
In August and the  
Story progresses  
In steady movement

For it is a solitary journey  
From darkness to light  
From silence to song  
From beginning to end  
Her story alone

## Zen Bandits

### A Lone Crow

In bright sunlight on a day in early Spring  
A lone crow perched on a high parapet wall  
Near my office window

Looking away from my monitor I watched it  
For a moment a feathered bookmark to feelings  
I cannot escape

I've watched gangs of crows under winter skies  
Flying from roof to roof on outstretched wings  
Dark mnemonics of despair

And If I could paint like Van Gogh I would  
Pepper storm clouds above the parking lot  
With waves of black wings

And if I could write like Poe I would mark  
The visit of a lone specter quoting in whispers  
Names I cannot speak



# Zen Bandits

## Building

It sometimes feels as if each word is a brick  
And the space between each line, a layer of mortar,  
That will dry slowly and harden with time,  
For it is the simple rules of symmetry that apply  
And a certain one up the other construction  
That brings to lines a lightness and geometric grace  
And to angles the sharp contrast of light and shadow  
That is the secret of the pediment and pilaster  
And the articulated magic of the cornice.

It is the one line written by Theodore Dreiser  
*"Who shall interpret the language of stones?"*  
That somehow endeared me to the man.  
And I recall it often and whisper the question,  
Sometimes half silent, Often out loud,  
As I stand facing each new façade or run my hand  
Against the cool smoothness of granite and  
The sandy roughness of hewn limestone.

It is with shape and form, the building blocks  
Of structure, that I speak to you now,  
With plumb lines and yard long levels,  
With rock cut and laid with precision,  
With pigment mixed with plaster,  
And with stone that is somehow budding  
New foliage, flowering and beginning to bloom  
And to grow to span the distance from earth to heaven.

# Zen Bandits

## Chamber Music

It was in an adagio of a Baroque sonata  
Strains of violin and cello  
Mixed with notes from piano  
And I debate and try and determine  
Albinoni?  
Lotti?  
Vivaldi?

Music uplifting and tempo sweetly rising  
In allegro con spirito and I wonder  
Buxtehude or Bach?  
And try hard to decide  
Cantata?  
Prelude?  
Fuge?

It is a softness Bach could render  
In movement stirring and spirited  
Like a summer storm  
Rain on the pavement  
The winds of late August bending  
And swaying the highest leaves and branches  
Variations in the treetops

## Zen Bandits

Anna Kournakova

She walks in shadows  
Comes in darkness  
Like a spirit  
Her movement invisible and silent  
Like the first weak breeze of spring  
Nearly here and half not

She wears the sheerest gauze fabric  
That is spun by the phantoms of my fantasies  
That work into the late hours of night  
Like Otired and weary women  
That labor for low wages  
In Indonesian sweatshops

She wiggles into my bed whispering words  
And touching me like a Muse  
To awaken a Disneyland of desire  
Were I hang stappadoed  
From the ceiling beams  
In her most malicious dreams

## Zen Bandits

### Apple Picking

Wearing a brown fedora and  
Standing in line  
At the ticket counter,  
A fine figure of a woman  
Traveling with two children,  
Fine figures too in their own right,  
Waiting and talking quietly.  
As she whispered to the children  
And smiled her face became childlike.  
And the shape of her smile  
Matched theirs and the teeth  
Were alike in whiteness,  
Fine figures all, apple of her eye,  
The way she rested a hand lightly  
On one's shoulder and touch  
Another's arm as an apple is  
Picked from a branch  
With both hands.

## Zen Bandits

### Audrey Hepburn Is Not Dead

Audrey Hepburn is not dead  
I saw her turn her lovely head  
Through the window of a train  
Through a morning filled with rain  
She showed a smile of quiet demure  
With elegance and soft allure  
Her eyes were wide her features small  
On sculpted neck that held them tall  
She winked and mouthed a word to me  
That no one else there seemed to see  
And me with no idea what to say  
I mouthed: "I loved a Roman Holiday"  
To the EL train passing by  
To beauty that refused to die

## Zen Bandits

### Belly Dancer

The music haunting and exotic  
Beats primitive and primal  
As she moves  
Tapping the time with castanets  
As the notes of strings and drums  
Are visible in each muscle that flows  
Now this way  
Now that  
To a tempo that alternates  
And slowly gains speed  
The hips pivot  
The belly grinds  
The breast bounce  
The body sings  
And hits and holds the plaintive high notes  
Then slows suddenly  
To a low roll  
Arms and hands  
Liquid under the lights  
Accompanied now  
Only by a lute  
As movement climbs from foot  
To ankle to calve and knee  
Up leg to thigh to hips  
To pelvis in manic motion  
And the slow undulations  
Of abdomen and stomach  
That rises to the blur of moving breasts  
To the wild shimmy of shoulders  
And the trailing movement of hair  
I am hypnotized by each twitch of muscle  
Each jiggle of flesh and wiggle of skin  
Until the only sensation that reaches me  
Is the scent of perfume  
Mixed with the smell of ouzo as I drink

## Zen Bandits

### Blame El Nino

There are storms between us  
Too much rain has fallen  
Skies are darkly clouded and  
Horizons hidden in mist  
I say blame El Nino

Dirty clothes on the floor  
Dinner plates left on the table  
With arrogance I ignore her mother  
And grunt acknowledge to her sisters  
I say blame El Nino  
She says that I am faithless  
Perfidious with passion devious  
With desire manipulating and  
Calculating and cold of heart  
I say blame El Nino

Flood waters never cresting wash out  
The bridges and droughts of touch  
Dry green feelings between us  
As thunder rolls in angry words  
I say blame El Nino

## Zen Bandits

### Detroit Blues

Night lingers  
Mornings  
Through lunchtime  
Into dinner  
And each meal  
Is eaten in darkness

With all  
Faces and forms  
Invisible  
It is touch  
Alone  
That shows shape

Color is  
Carried in the  
Confused  
Phenomenology  
Of sounds  
On the street

Light  
A lonely voice  
Rising above stillness  
On dark boulevards  
Where only music  
Moves



# Zen Bandits

## Childhood's Friend

I attended a  
Funeral  
Of a friend  
Yesterday  
At Nativity church

I met his  
Family  
As a man  
Embracing  
Them in turn

They whispered my  
Childhood  
Name to me  
Forgotten  
Now recalled: "Douglas"

At Nativity church  
Yesterday  
I attended a  
Funeral  
Of a friend

## Zen Bandits

### Christmas 1979

Glittering aluminum garland  
Frames my Picasso print of  
Madonna and child, and  
I smile into my bourbon,  
Unraveling bittersweet ironies,  
Confusion in the court of Herod,  
Scholars worshipping a carpenter's son,  
The stirring of divinity in a barnyard,  
And I believe, believe in a stunt  
Only God could pull off,  
Slapping the hand of providence  
And arm wrestling fate.  
I believe in a meaning  
Running deeper than the  
Glitter sprinkled flowering  
Of plastic poinsettias.  
I believe in Christmas.

## Zen Bandits

### Sunset

Sitting on the front porch steps  
Alongside her on June evenings  
Pointing out things transformed  
Seen in a new light at sundown

Elms in a lot across the street  
A blend of light and shadow  
On summer days but at twilight  
They become different trees

Sipping iced tea we watch shaded  
Areas in the trees' interiors recede  
And to me in the softening light  
Her face looks young once again

Hidden in darkness but now visible  
Limbs are charcoal lines some curved  
Some angled holding aloft canopies  
Of foliage filled with sunset tints

We lean into each other shoulder  
On shoulder we touch a breeze  
On our faces arms bare legs  
Making strands of hair quiver

The wind moves leaves rhythmically  
Swaying in gentle motion like  
Some sea plant bending graceful  
This way and that in ocean currents

I wish for summer always  
In Junes never ending with elms  
Always lit in sunset colors and  
Her face young once again

## Zen Bandits

### September Afternoons

Goldenrod in bloom hovers over green fields  
Like a nimbus that seems to float in lighter than air fashion  
In these last days of summer and oaks and maples and ash  
All blend their leaves in a patchwork of foliage that blots out  
the sky  
And paints chocolate shadows on the milky brightness of  
September afternoons

The grasses seem to sway to Bach's Air on the G String  
Slow and somewhat sad in a soft trace of breeze  
On a rural road bordered by woods and open fields  
Where silence hangs heavy in the air  
As if something speeding has slowed to a full stop  
And only the scent of hickory moves through the grass and  
rustles

## Zen Bandits

### Haunting

She looks at me and says  
That I am the ghost of my father  
Sitting on her sofa  
Or sleeping on her love seat  
And I agree and tell her  
That his death is simply a ruse  
To avoid work and skirt  
Obligations for he is a genius  
And will avoid bills for eternity

At the dinner table  
She calls me by his name  
The incarnation of waywardness  
Whenever displeasure  
Is expressed or faults counted  
My father lives again  
Whenever work goes undone  
Money is squandered  
And promises broken

Don't blame me for  
It is my father's fault  
For it is the spirit  
Of disappointing days  
That haunts this place  
And falls asleep watching T.V.  
And it is only the words repeated  
Three times as you spin  
Around and around

That can exorcise this place  
And cleanse it of all his vices  
The smell of cigarettes  
Mixed with the muskiness  
Of yesterdays clothes  
And the sound of his snores  
As he naps in sunlight  
Stretched out on the sofa  
On summer afternoons

In childish invocation  
You must say as you twirl  
In the center of the living room

## Zen Bandits

And repeat after me  
The tragic incantation  
That will force out his ghost

Deadbeat  
Liar  
You own me money

## Zen Bandits

### A Humble Homily

I don't want to be lectured  
Nor do I want to be preached at,  
But rather I wish for you to impart  
Wisdom in the weakest voice  
That is more a hoarse whisper  
A mere breathing of words  
Teetering on the narrow threshold  
Of my auditory perception

I don't want instruction or lessons  
Imparted with the goal of enlightenment  
But give me only a half-hidden hint  
Intimated with ambiguous reference  
And let each breath that breaks your speech  
Grow to fill long minutes with silence  
For I mistrust too many words  
And eloquence simply raises suspicion

I don't want you to teach me  
Or indulge me with pedagogical condescension  
But only the weakest most whimsical and  
Oblique allusions will work  
Wrapped in soft spoken phrases and  
Punctuated with long pauses  
Give me only faint indications patiently planted  
In the proper season

# Zen Bandits

## Threshold

In the threshold of dissolution and decay  
Decomposition and death  
So dense and deep  
In the blackness of a jaw agape  
A mouthful of darkness  
Holding all the "Oh nO's"  
And assorted exclamations  
Of a multitude of days  
An eternity of nights  
Where bedsheets are shrouds  
And each sofa a sarcophagus  
Lit only by the shadows flickering  
From television screens left on  
And unwatched in the middle of the night  
Broadcast a twilight over sleeping  
Figures and forms that move in  
The slow and unconscious movements  
Of a leg stirring or a hand twitching

And if I slip into the anti-light  
I will dream origami gulls  
Hovering on unmoving wings and  
Soaring under stained-glass skies  
High above the acid-etch of frosted tips  
On white capped waves  
And my ears will fill with Bach  
Concertos and preludes and fugues  
And I will dream the marble of  
Bare breasts and ass  
The slightest curves of softest lines  
And breathe the scent of her skin  
As I sleep forever  
Dreaming in her arms



# Zen Bandits

## Holes

And I knew if I began  
I could go on at length  
Continue for a long while  
To discuss and document  
All small and intricate details  
Of holes  
Inner and outer  
Upper and lower  
Real and surreal  
Figurative and literal  
Physical and spiritual

Oh what know of holes?  
Would fill volumes  
Tomes of epic poetry  
A Paradise Lost  
An Iliad of holes  
A Wasteland of holes  
Holes in ozone  
Holes in the sky  
Holes in space  
Holes that suck matter  
Holes that bend light

In a world of holes  
Oh what an expert  
On the metaphysics of them  
All the small and secret details  
Of the science of them  
Holes that fill conversation  
Holes that fill silence  
Holes that touch  
Holes left touched

I am a poet of holes  
Who writes  
Of the seen and unseen  
The visible and invisible  
Secret and known to all  
Little holes  
Big holes

## Zen Bandits

Empty holes  
Full holes  
I have written only  
Of holes  
A lifetime of renderings  
Of gaps and openings  
Holes with meaning  
And holes devoid

I would go on  
To say that the universe  
At its very basic foundation  
Is built and composed  
Of an infinite number  
Of holes  
Some connected  
Some unconnected  
Some large  
Some small  
Holes deep  
Holes shallow  
Holes in me  
Holes in my verse

## Zen Bandits

### Morning

In early morning  
As the house sleeps  
And the yellow light  
Of sunrise shines  
In east windows

In silence  
I study my roll-top desk  
The dog-eared papers  
Leaning from  
Pigeonholes

My monitor dark  
And disk drives still  
Without the telltale  
Flash of status lights  
Or a fan's quiet hum

My cane-back chair  
Pushed away at an angle  
And for the first time  
I see myself gone  
From this place

For a long while  
In awakening introspection  
I survey the spot  
Its smallness and emptiness  
Full now with morning light

My absence  
Left to the assessment  
Of children and the  
And the jagged-sharp edges  
Of a lover's judgment

## Zen Bandits

### In Her Bath

Pierre Bonnard painted his lover  
Naked in her bath  
Entering, leaving and lying  
In a tub or drying herself

Always the same portrait  
More form than face  
As if trying to capture some  
Constant and recurring dream

In color vivid and surreal  
He painted her problems  
Entering, leaving and lying  
In luminous twilight

And I am touched he continued  
To paint her young as she aged  
As if to reverse time's rendering  
In a refusal to lose something dear

## Zen Bandits

### In The Shadows

Sheltered in the shadows  
Under the thatch roof of the tiki bar  
I watch the sun beyond the gulf  
And the waters painted with the orange gleam  
Of weakening light grow more vivid  
And I think of her  
Bombay dry gin with a pinch of rosemary  
Helps me remember

For a long time I watch the sea  
Deeply green and rippled like back of a turtle shell  
And feel the rip tides pulling me out  
Far beyond my recollections of her  
And past the marker buoys bobbing  
Like pelicans in gentle waves  
As I drift out sea with nothing to grab onto  
And no one to call out to

My past obligations that once stretched  
To the vanishing point are left  
Standing with her on a beach  
Now more distant and obscure  
Than the fuzzy mist that hangs  
Over the horizon and hides the  
Sharp and jagged edges of a flat world

## Zen Bandits

### Walking

Waking with her on Saturdays  
Through the open-air market  
We walk the main aisleway  
Lined with colors from flats of flowers  
And greens from hanging ferns

The market is a brick arched awning  
With clerestory and high ceiling  
Cast in dimness and heavy shadows  
Like a cavernous French cathedral  
Or a deep Roman basilica

Holding hands we move down  
A darkened nave bordered with  
Tiger lilies and sunflowers like  
Paintings I have seen of an artist's  
Garden at Giverny or Vetheuil

We talk in whispers with lips  
Moving next to ears to hear above  
The echoes from a congregation  
Of feet and the vendors chanting  
Prices in the gloom like monks

I ask her the name of this flower  
Or that and I love her for always  
Knowing the answer and paying  
The peddlers with exact change  
That she counts so beautifully

## Zen Bandits

### I Came I Saw I Walked To School

The smokestacks of abandoned factories  
Are Ionic columns holding up the sky  
Over the far east side  
And the rusting black water towers  
Are parapets across the frontier  
That look out over a landscape marred  
By decrepitude and dereliction with  
Poverty of historic proportions  
Straight from the tenement slums  
Of Imperial Rome  
As children walk through the shadows to school  
An achievement as great as Caesar  
Conquering all of Gaul

## Zen Bandits

### Dreams

I dream many times  
Of walking with her  
In an afternoon filled  
With sunlight  
She walks in shoes  
I am barefoot  
The heat from the concrete  
On my bare soles  
Bristles of grass  
Between my toes is soft  
And cooler ground

I dream many times  
Of sitting next to her  
On a front-porch step  
Watching trees  
Painted on a dark blue  
Background of sky  
That is a Spring evening  
Alive with motion  
From a soft wind  
That moves cool  
Against our skin



## Zen Bandits

### In The Garden

I wear a straw hat and canvas gloves  
As I dig among the irises in the garden  
She is hatless and brushing the hair  
From her eyes as she struggles to work  
Hollyhock and bee balm into the ground

I read a story once by D.H. Lawrence  
Now long forgotten and until now when I recall  
Only the title "England, My England"  
And a man named Egbert for it is strange how  
Memory has a life quite independent of me

I plant a clump of German Bearded Irises  
Along the fence and I see that she has moved on  
To planting pink and purple pansies  
And somehow what I can't remember  
Is so important to me now

I shout to her how well the lilies do  
Along the back wall and I tell her  
I will hang another bird feeder from a tree limb  
And I forget that I've forgotten  
That story I can never remember

## Zen Bandits

### The Lake

I went to the lake today  
To fish but caught none  
And only watched large carp  
Mating in the boat wells

My father was a fisherman  
I think of him on the dock  
In the sound of waves and  
The freighters steaming

Twirling and splashing  
Fish tails wagging in air  
Slapping their bodies loud  
Against catamaran hulls

I fish with my father's poles  
And spinning reels wooden  
Minnows and metal spoons  
Spinner baits and feathered jigs

Carp colored black and white  
Like Jersey cows float on the  
Stone calm surface of the lake  
Flapping fins swimming lazily

Lures painted spotted sail  
Like sea birds over the lake  
Standing on the dock casting  
The ghost of my father fishing

## Zen Bandits

### Grace

If there were sunlight today  
It would be shining through  
Windows, prisms  
Through waterglasses and  
Reflecting off silverware.

Ice cubes dancing in a drink  
Make the muffled rattle of  
My grandmother's prayerbeads.  
Knives clang in shrillness of silver  
Striking china and spoon stirs chime.

Spices lifted airborne in spires  
Of rising steam, clove and garlic  
Oregano and bay, the smell of candied yams  
And honeyed hams, her perfume when  
Her cheek presses against my nose.

Bread and butter on my tongue,  
A ghost of salt, a spirit of sweetness  
As corn flies like goldfinches  
Across a mash potato sky and are  
Married together in my mouth.

Her hand resting lightly on my shoulder  
As she passes from behind, there are  
Essays on fingers and poetry in palms,  
And a wisping smell of spice,  
As she leans toward me to kiss.

## Zen Bandits

### Frontporch

If this poem had legs and feet  
It would walk to her house on  
July afternoons

When the sidewalk is baking  
Hot and dandelions punctuate  
Long lawns

If this poem had arms and hands  
It would hold her on her frontporch  
Painted In

Cool shade from the maple tree in  
The front yard it's leaves and branches  
An arbor

If this poem had palms and fingers  
It would touch her face as it kissed  
The quivering

Shadow of a maple leaf on her cheek  
As she's embraced by a poem on  
Her frontporch

## Zen Bandits

### Image In The Mirror

The image in the mirror  
Is me at fourteen sitting  
On the edge of the bed  
Listening to the Beatles's  
Strawberry Fields

It is summer and the  
Image in the mirror is  
Sweating and windows  
Without screens are open so  
Music escapes in the night

The image in the mirror  
Shows my room ransacked  
Clothes strewn willy-nilly  
Junk piled on dressers and  
Me swaying with music

Rehearsing conversations  
With girls in the image  
In the mirror that never came  
About but escaped out the  
Windows on summer nights

## Zen Bandits

### Monet's Heaven

It was a sky Monet would paint she said  
Pastel blue with high flat clouds hanging  
Like haze over the far horizon

It is a sky from a Pissarro landscape  
I argue painted stratus style to Monet's  
Cavalcade of cumulous clouds

Today I saw a Monet sky with white  
Islands separated by an ocean of blue  
Over winter bare April woods

And I wished her with me to see  
Parading over red barns with gray silos  
Above fallow fields an impressionist sky

Not a Pissarro, Degas or Renior sky  
But painted in the sunlit blue and white  
Shades of Monet's heaven

## Zen Bandits

### Dream

In a dream  
Orange and amber light  
Fills clouds hovering  
On the horizon

And lost  
My east and west confused  
In temporal cushiness  
And sleepy physics

I wonder  
Its meaning for me  
Trying to discern  
Sunrise or sunset

## Zen Bandits

### In the Taxman's Office

Waiting in the tax man's office  
While he steps out to research a deduction  
The room is bright but coldly clinical  
Like a doctor's examining room it is  
Without windows and the stark white walls  
Are adorned only by an antique map of the world  
Circa 1600 I estimate by the misshapen continents  
*Nova Totius Terrarum* it says  
And I think the taxman has no heart for art  
Or such a thing would not break the stark  
White silence of his walls

My wife sitting next to me  
Sighs in an extended exhale and  
Rests her head on my shoulder as  
I notice the only color in the room  
Is the large plastic plant in a pot on the floor  
And an artificial fern hanging  
In a basket from the ceiling  
The taxman's desk is clear and clean  
Except for a paper-roll calculator,  
A computer keyboard with dirty keys and  
A monitor with smudges marks across the glass

I trace a seam in the Formica surface of his desk  
With my fingernail and run my hand  
Across the unsurfaced underside of the desk  
Particleboard I think to myself  
And he is away too long too carefully researching  
A tax deduction that I am indifferent to  
I lean toward my wife and in the stark white  
Silence of the taxman's office  
We close our eye to the brightness  
And kiss with careless disregard  
For last years deductions



## Zen Bandits

### Indiana

It's a wonderful thing  
November  
In central Indiana  
Where nothing gets between  
You  
And the sunset

The snow  
I feel it coming  
And soon it will fill  
Each furrow in the  
Farmer's field

In lines weightless  
And white  
Like  
My grandmother's hair

# Zen Bandits

## Chamber Music

It was in an adagio of a Baroque sonata  
Strains of violin and cello  
Mixed with notes from piano  
And I debate and try and determine  
Albinoni?  
Lotti?  
Vivaldi?

Music uplifting and tempo sweetly rising  
In allegro con spirito and I wonder  
Buxtehude or Bach?  
And try hard to decide  
Cantata?  
Prelude?  
Fuge?

It is a softness Bach could render  
In movement stirring and spirited  
Like a summer storm  
Rain on the pavement  
The winds of late August bending  
And swaying the highest leaves and branches  
Variations in the treetops

## Zen Bandits

### Jacob's Creek

Bathing with her  
Our wine in faceted crystal  
On the tub's ledge  
Immersed in warmth  
We drink sauvignon blanc  
That shines golden  
In the glasses like sunrise  
Over snow

I sip slowly from my glass  
As she watches  
For approval and I smile  
And tell her the wine  
Cold in my mouth  
Dry on my tongue  
Tastes like the air of a  
January morning

## Zen Bandits

### Late August

It is late August  
And overcast and raining again  
It seems somehow fitting that after  
The bright light of July afternoons  
That burn in memory  
Washed in white hot brightness  
Like an overexposed print  
That the summer somehow slowly sink  
Into cool wetness that is September  
And the photonegative twilights  
That grow to autumn evenings

## Zen Bandits

### Late September

The moon is bright  
Behind a sycamore  
That stretches in silhouette  
Into the stars

We sit on the front porch  
Watching the wind  
Moving through leaves  
And high branches

Decked in summer foliage  
And swaying gentle  
Graceful and calm on nights  
In late September

We scan the western sky  
Searching for the Belt of Orion  
But give up and go inside  
Together

## Zen Bandits

### My Own Lebnan

In the afternoons  
A tarboosh tilted on my head  
And wearing sunglasses  
I sit on the street outside the shop  
In a wooden chair  
And lift the wooden mouthpiece  
Of a waterpipe to my lips and  
Lazily exhale a pale gray haze

Soon I set down the hose  
Lean my head back to nap  
As I always do in late afternoon  
The tassel from my hat  
Telegraphs my state as  
It hangs at 90 degrees  
To the 45 degree angle  
Of a head asleep

In the distance  
Blue mountains protrude  
Into purple clouds  
And coolness comes off the sea  
Asleep  
I did not see the rain come  
But feel it on my face and awake  
To the hissing of an ember  
Struck by the drizzle and smoldering  
In the tray of my pipe

## Zen Bandits

### Limousine Dreams

I wake up from limousine dreams to the dark  
Interior of a black stretch Lincoln having  
Switch off the neon effect and mood lighting  
Soon after entering and leaning back in the  
Camelback bench seats I close my eyes  
Once again stretch out my legs cross my hands  
Across my chest and play dead in the gaudy  
Plushness and overly ornate trappings  
Of a slow-moving hearse on the highway

And I think death is a long trip away from those  
You love the driver I never speak with  
Wears a dark suite that highlights his  
White beard one day I will call him by name:  
Mike take me to the cemetery not the airport today  
Directing him to a grave we'll get out and stand  
In the snow together praying on a day I wake up  
In darkness and discover I have died

## Zen Bandits

### Lines Written at 37,000 Feet

The clouds stretching out below  
Spread across the earth like fresh linen  
As I am carried away across the sky  
On the high-pitched whisper of jet engines  
And turbine blades spinning at invisible speeds

And I understand at this moment  
That the relationship of her and I  
Is many degrees more complex than the  
Hum-drum physics of flight and the  
Miracle of lift or the magic of drag

At the kitchen table where she is reading  
The morning newspaper jostling the pages  
Into neatness and slowly sipping her tea  
Is falling away at 500 mph and fast becoming  
The line where time and distance intersect

Somewhere in my past  
She is looking out a window at the morning's  
Gentle grayness and inchoate drizzle  
As she walks down the dark hallway I hear  
The sound of her slippers sliding across the linoleum

I am the servant of time and she the slave of distance  
For neither her nor I can grasp the future  
Or the understand the present  
Slipping away of earthbound love at near sonic speeds  
In atmosphere too rare to breathe

My startled awakenings without recollection of dreams  
Where I remember nothing  
But the night's empty darkness  
That graduates in slow stages to gray mornings  
In strange and unfamiliar cities



## Zen Bandits

### Lines

Yesterday, I crossed a great spiritual abyss  
And hung the wash on clotheslines in the yard  
To dry in the sun.

Bath towels danced in the warm wind like majestic  
Banners of slow moving summer mornings  
Creeping toward noon.

Holding wooden clothespins in my mouth, I stretched  
Boxer shorts with fish swimming this way and that  
Across the line.

And I thought of her and summers ago in the tiny yard  
That bordered the alley and remembered the grass  
Needing cutting.

Her cotton sheets billowing magically like sails  
Of ships that would carry me far away from that  
Poorly kept yard,

Carry me here, to the instant realization, of how to  
Read clothes on the line and all the secrets that  
Come out in the wash.

## Zen Bandits

### About Doug Tanoury



Doug Tanoury is primarily a poet of the Internet with the majority of his work never leaving electronic form. His verse can be read at electronic magazines and journals across the world. Collections of poetry by Doug Tanoury can be found at Funky Dog Publishing <http://www.funkydogpublishing.com> and Athens Avenue <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/dtanoury1/Athens/index.htm>

This and other ebook collections of poetry by Doug Tanoury can be read and downloaded at:

<http://home.comcast.net/~dtanoury1/Tanoury.html>

Doug grew up in Detroit, Michigan and still lives in the area.

Doug Tanoury credits his 7th grade poetry anthology from Sister Debra's English class, *Reflections On A Gift Of Watermelon Pickle And Other Modern Verse*, (Stephen Dunning, Edward Lueders and Hugh Smith, (c) 1966 by Scott Foresman & Company) as exerting the greatest influence on his work. He still keeps a copy of it at his writing desk.